

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Note that Applicants' amendment is sufficient to overcome the 112 claim rejections and the art rejections and sufficient to place the instant claims in condition for allowance. The polishing layer consists of a hydrophilic polymeric matrix and the liquid non-water soluble microelements and hollow polymeric microelements uniformly distributed in the polymeric matrix. During the cleaning, embedded microelements exposed on the surface of the polishing layer flow out and thus open pores are formed on the surface of the polishing layer (see page 16, lines 5-10 of the present specification). Likewise, the open pores are not present in the interior surface of the polishing pad. The amendment is fully supported by the specification of the present invention.

Of the references of record, the most pertinent are Molnar et al (US 6,267,644), Kono et al (US 6,943,138) and Hirayama (US 6,383,564).

Molnar discloses a polishing pad that requires a water soluble finishing aid which is a not required component of the claimed invention.

Kono discloses a oil clearing sheet comprising two porous stretched films wherein one stretched film consists of a hydrophilic polymeric matrix and mineral oil embedded in the polymeric matrix (example 14, column 4, line 66 to column 5, lines 1-2). The hydrophilic polymeric matrix comprises polyethylene and a liquid absorbing substance such as polyoxyethylene alkyl ether (column 7, lines 50- 65). Stretching the film forms micropores around the mineral oil (column 4, lines 38-40). This at least indicates that the micropores are dispersed throughout the polymer matrix (column 4,

lines 65-67, column 5, lines 1-2, example 1, column 4, lines 45-55). Kono fails to teach or suggest that the micropores are uniformly distributed across an exterior surface of the film and the micropores are not present in the interior surface of the film.

Hirayama discloses a composite material comprising a substrate and a porous covering layer formed on the substrate (figure 1). The porous covering layer consists of a hydrophilic polymeric matrix and silicone oil embedded in the polymeric matrix (claim 1, column 4, lines 15-23). The silicone oil is volatilized to leave micropores (column 4, lines 35-38). The open pores are uniformly distributed over the entire surface of the covering layer, including the exterior and interior surfaces of the covering layer (column 4, lines 58-65). Accordingly, Hirayama fails to teach or suggest that the micropores are uniformly distributed across an exterior surface of the film and the micropores are not present in the interior surface of the film.

Note that, none of the cited art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a polishing pad with a structure set forth in the claim. Accordingly, the instant claims are deemed allowable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hai Vo whose telephone number is (571) 272-1485.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 to 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Callie Shosho can be reached on (571) 272-1123. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Hai Vo/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1794